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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9823
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RUHBANB/OKINAWA FLD OFC US FORCES JAPAN CP BUTLER JA PRIORITY
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INFO RUEHFK/AMCONSUL FUKUOKA 4617
RUEHNH/AMCONSUL NAHA 7020
RUEHNAG/AMCONSUL NAGOYA 3393
RUEHKSO/AMCONSUL SAPPORO 5279
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STATE FOR I/RF, PA/PR/FPC/W, IIP/G/EA, EAP/PD, R/MR,
EAP/J, EAP/P, PM;
USTR FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE;
TREASURY FOR OASIA/IMI;
SECDEF FOR OASD/PA;
CP BUTLER OKINAWA FOR AREA FIELD OFFICE;
PACOM HONOLULU FOR PUBLIC DIPLOMACY ADVISOR

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: TOKYO MEDIA REACTION - ANNAPOLIS MEETING

LEAD STORIES: Most Wednesday morning papers gave top coverage to Tokyo prosecutors' plans to arrest a former senior defense ministry official as early as today on suspicion of accepting bribes in the form of wining and dining from an arrested former defense hardware trading firm executive.

"Resumption of U.S.-led Middle East Peace Talks Welcomed" Liberal Asahi editorialized (11/28): "With the aim of achieving a breakthrough in the stalemated Middle East peace process, delegations from more than 40 nations, including Israel and the Palestinian Authority, have gathered in the U.S. in response to President Bush's invitation. President Bush, whose term is nearing its end, initiated the conference in an attempt to create a diplomatic achievement. Regardless of his motives, the President's determination to face up to a situation exacerbated by the war in Iraq and other factors should be welcomed.... Prior to the conference, the President said that the U.S. shares the goal of two democratic nations coexisting in peace and stability. This statement confirms Washington's support for the establishment of a Palestinian state. Fortunately, Syria and Saudi Arabia, which have direct interests in the Israeli-Palestinian talks, are taking part in the meeting. The U.S. should make a serious effort to work on Israel."

SCHIEFFER